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FOR NEA/ELA, R, S/P AND H
NSC FOR PASCUAL AND KUTCHA-HELBLING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2028
TAGS: PGOV PHUM KDEM EG
SUBJECT: APRIL 6 ACTIVIST ON HIS U.S. VISIT AND REGIME
CHANGE IN EGYPT

REF: A. CAIRO 2462
1B. CAIRO 2454
1C. CAIRO 2431

Classified By: ECPO A/Mincouns Catherine Hill-Herndon for reason 1.4 (d).

11. (C) Summary and comment: On December 23, April 6 activist XXXXXXXXXXXX expressed satisfaction with his participation in the December 3-5 "Alliance of Youth Movements Summit," and with his subsequent meetings with USG officials, on Capitol Hill, and with think tanks. He described how State Security (SSIS) detained him at the Cairo airport upon his return and confiscated his notes for his summit presentation calling for democratic change in Egypt, and his schedule for his Congressional meetings. XXXXXXXXXXXX contended that the GOE will never undertake significant reform, and therefore, Egyptians need to replace the current regime with a parliamentary democracy. He alleged that several opposition parties and movements have accepted an unwritten plan for democratic transition by 2011; we are doubtful of this claim. XXXXXXXXXXXX said that although SSIS recently released two April 6 activists, it also arrested three additional group members. We have pressed the MFA for the release of these April 6 activists. April 6's stated goal of replacing the current regime with a parliamentary democracy prior to the 2011 presidential elections is highly unrealistic, and is not supported by the mainstream opposition. End summary and comment.

Satisfaction with the Summit

12. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX expressed satisfaction with the December 3-5 "Alliance of Youth Movements Summit" in New York, noting that he was able to meet activists from other countries and outline his movement's goals for democratic change in Egypt. He told us that the other activists at the summit were very supportive, and that some even offered to hold public demonstrations in support of Egyptian democracy in their countries, with XXXXXXXXXXXX as an invited guest. XXXXXXXXXXXX said he discussed with the other activists how April 6 members could more effectively use computer "simcards." However, XXXXXXXXXXXX lamented to us that because most April 6 members do not own computers, this tactic would be impossible to implement. XXXXXXXXXXXX was appreciative of the successful efforts by the Department and the summit organizers to protect his identity at the summit, and told us that his name was never mentioned publicly.

A Cold Welcome Home

13. (S) XXXXXXXXXXXX told us that SSIS detained and searched him at the Cairo Airport on December 18 upon his return from the U.S. According to XXXXXXXXXXXX, SSIS found and confiscated two documents in his luggage: notes for his presentation at the summit that described April 6's demands for democratic transition in Egypt, and a schedule of his Capitol Hill meetings. XXXXXXXXXXXX described how the SSIS officer told him that State Security is compiling a file on him, and that the officer's superiors instructed him to file a report on XXXXXXXXXXXX's most recent activities.

Washington Meetings and April 6 Ideas for Regime Change

14. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX described his Washington appointments as positive, saying that on the Hill he met with Rep. Edward Royce, a variety of House staff members, including from the offices of Rep. Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Rep. Wolf (R-VA), and with two Senate staffers. XXXXXXXXXXXX also noted that he met with several think tank members. XXXXXXXXXXXX said that Rep. Wolf's office invited him to speak at a late January Congressional hearing on House Resolution 1303 regarding religious and political freedom in Egypt. XXXXXXXXXXXX told us he is interested in attending, but conceded he is unsure whether he will have the funds to make the trip. He indicated to us that he has not been focusing on his work as a "fixer" for journalists, due to his preoccupation with his U.S. trip.

15. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX described how he tried to convince his Washington interlocutors that the USG should pressure the GOE to implement significant reforms by threatening to reveal

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information about GOE officials' alleged "illegal" off-shore bank accounts. He hoped that the U.S. and the international community would freeze these bank accounts, like the accounts of Zimbabwean President Mugabe's confidantes. XXXXXXXXXXXX said he wants to convince the USG that Mubarak is worse than Mugabe and that the GOE will never accept democratic reform. XXXXXXXXXXXX asserted that Mubarak derives his legitimacy from U.S. support, and therefore responsible for Mubarak's "crimes." He accused NGOs working on political and economic reform of living in a "fantasy world," and not recognizing that Mubarak -- "the head of the snake" -- must step aside to enable democracy to take root.

16. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX claimed that several opposition forces -- including the Wafd, Nasserite, Karama and Tagammu parties, and the Muslim Brotherhood, Kifaya, and Revolutionary Socialist movements -- have agreed to support an unwritten plan for a transition to a parliamentary democracy, involving a weakened presidency and an empowered prime minister and parliament, before the scheduled 2011 presidential elections (ref C). According to XXXXXXXXXXXX, the opposition is interested in

receiving support from the army and the police for a transitional government prior to the 2011 elections. XXXXXXXXXXXX asserted that this plan is so sensitive it cannot be written down. (Comment: We have no information to corroborate that these parties and movements have agreed to the unrealistic plan XXXXXXXXXXXX has outlined. Per ref C, XXXXXXXXXXXX previously told us that this plan was publicly available on the internet. End comment

17. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX said that the GOE has recently been cracking down on the April 6 movement by arresting its members. XXXXXXXXXXXX noted that although SSIS had released XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX "in the impossible" due to SSIS interference, XXXXXXXXXXXX said. He lamented that the GOE has driven the group's leadership underground, and that one of its leaders, Ahmed Maher, has been in hiding for the past week.

18. (C) Comment: XXXXXXXXXXXX offered no roadmap of concrete steps toward April 6's highly unrealistic goal of replacing the current regime with a parliamentary democracy prior to the 2011 presidential elections. Most opposition parties and independent NGOs work toward achieving tangible, incremental reform within the current political context, even if they may be pessimistic about their chances of success. XXXXXXXXXXXX's wholesale rejection of such an approach places him outside this mainstream of opposition politicians and activists.
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